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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2353

March 10, 1988

MORE WHEAT TO EGYPT

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, \$30 million in credit guarantees previously earmarked for various U.S. agricultural commodities to Egypt has been reallocated to enable that country to buy more U.S. wheat under the Commodity Credit Corporation's Export Credit Guarantee Program. (For more information, call 202/447-3224.)

CONSERVATION RESERVE SIGN-UP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has received bids submitted on 4,507,170 acres during the sixth signup of the Conservation Reserve Program. The USDA plans to announce on or about May 20 the acreage accepted for the sixth signup. The information will not be available before then because of program changes called for by Congress in the 1988 appropriations. A seventh signup was announced for July 18 through August 5.

CORN, SORGHUM DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will make about \$1 billion 450 million in deficiency payments this month to eligible producers of 1987 crop corn and sorghum. The payments will be in generic commodity certificates and will be issued through local offices of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service as soon as possible.

CORN EXPORT FOR THAILAND REDUCED

Rising feed use combined with smaller crops have contributed to a continued decline in Thailand's exportable corn supply, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Domestic production has fallen 50 percent from 5 million 400 thousand tons in 1985 to an estimated 2 million 740 thousand tons in 1987. Thailand's domestic use is forecast to rise 40 percent to 1 million 800 thousand tons during this same time period. Exportable corn supplies may drop to about 30 percent of last year's exports. Traditional Thai markets, such as Malaysia and South Korea, may continue to seek U.S. corn to fill their needs.

SUMMARY OF LOAN ACTIVITY THROUGH OCT. 31

The Commodity Credit Corporation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture had \$27 billion 700 million invested in commodity loans and inventories on October 31. Outstanding loans totaled \$15 billion 800 million and inventories totaled \$11 billion 100 million. A year earlier, CCC had a total investment of \$30 billion 600 million, including \$18 billion 600 million in loans outstanding and inventories of \$12 billion 100 million.

FARMER'S SHARE OF FOOD DOLLAR

American consumers spent over \$92 billion on domestic food in 1967, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Farmers received \$29 billion of that sum, while \$63 billion went to the marketing process. By 1987, consumer food expenditures quadrupled to \$375 billion. Farmers received \$95 billion and marketing absorbed \$280 billion.

IT'S SUPER SLURPER!

How do you keep a bunch of worms moist long enough to kill weevils that chew up citrus tree roots? According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, you put the worms, known as nematodes, into something called super slurper and pour it on citrus tree roots before planting. The super absorbent super slurper keeps the nematodes moist because the soil stays moist. Previously, nematodes weren't used as a natural weevil control because they die quickly if soil dries out. The super slurper is made from cornstarch, and it has the ability to hold up to 2,000 times its own weight in water.

AGRICULTURE MAKES JOBS

Agriculture is the nation's number one industry. The farm sector's assets are \$692 billion. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, agriculture employs 21 million people - 1 out of 5 American jobs. All together, 18 percent of America's labor force either farms...or supplies farmers with goods and services...or processes, transports, and distributes farm products from farms to consumers.

JANUARY 1988 DAIRY HIGHLIGHTS

The highlights of dairy production for January, 1988, are as follows, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture: Butter production, 125 million pounds, 14 percent above both January and December 1987; American type cheese, 226 million pounds, 3 percent above January a year ago; total cheese output, excluding cottage cheese, 433 million pounds, 5 percent above January a year earlier; creamed cottage cheese, 51 million pounds; lowfat cottage cheese, 21 million pounds; canned evaporated and condensed whole milk, over 44 million pounds.

CHOCOLATE LOVERS: REJOICE!

The world cocoa bean production for the 1987/88 crop year is estimated at a record 2 million 60 thousand tons, nearly 5 percent greater than a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. U.S. imports of cocoa beans and products totaled \$1 billion 300 million in 1987, up from 1986 imports of \$1 billion 210 million. Prices during the early months of 1988 have continued weak, reflecting the anticipated growth in global stocks. This should make chocolate lovers happy.

"WHERE THE DEER AND THE ANTELOPE PLAY"...AFTER INSPECTION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to expand its voluntary exotic animal inspection program to include elk, deer, antelope, water buffalo and other exotic animals used for food. The reason is that consumer demand for meat from exotic animals has grown. This proposal is at the request of exotic animal producers. The proposal is in the Feb. 24 Federal Register. Send comments in duplicate by April 26 to Linda Carey, FSIS Hearing Clerk, Room 3168-S, FSIS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SMILE - YOU'RE
ON X-RAY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is installing X-ray systems at 11 major airports to screen baggage of overseas travelers for prohibited agricultural items. The X-rays will be looking for prohibited meats, fruits and vegetables. Large signs will tell travelers that X-ray equipment is being used as a screening tool. The beagles will still be around to spot the smugglers. Imported meats can carry exotic diseases that could devastate American livestock. Fruits and vegetables coming into the country can carry pests that could seriously damage American crops.

INSURANCE
REQUIRED FOR
LOANS

To qualify for Farmers Home Administration emergency loans, farmers must carry multi-peril crop insurance, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The 1985 Farm Bill prohibits FmHA from making emergency loans for losses of uninsured crops that could have been covered by crop insurance. Federally subsidized crop insurance is now available on wheat, corn, barley, grain sorghum, oats, upland cotton and rice, plus about 35 other specialty crops. For more information, contact FCIC field offices, or FmHA and ASCS county offices.

FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1606... (Weekly 13½ min documentary) On this edition of AGRICULTURE USA, George Holmes takes an in-depth look at the troubled farm machinery industry.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1594... (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Conservation Reserve update; Stable fuel prices; Longer lasting apples; Neighbor to neighbor.

CONSUMER TIME #1086... (Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Tips on reducing pesticide use in your home garden; IPM and the home gardener; U.S. vs. Soviet diets; French fry fortunes; Restaurant industry still growing.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE... Thurs, Mar. 17, Ag outlook; Fri, Mar. 18, Cattle on feed and catfish report; Mon, Mar. 21, World ag. outlook; Tues, Mar. 22, Weekly weather and crop summary. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

TELEVISION SERVICE programs, A BETTER WAY, DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and SATELLITE NEWS are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8 as follows:

Thursdays... AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET... Transponder 12D

Saturdays... A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET... Transponder 9X
ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET... Transponder 9X
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET... Transponder 9X

Mondays... A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET... Transponder 12D
REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET... Transponder 12D
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET... Transponder 12D

A BETTER WAY is also available on The Learning Channel SATCOM 3R, Transponder 2, Audio 6.8 each Friday 11:00 a.m. ET.

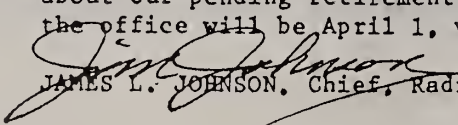
OFF MIKE

Garth Clark, who used to be with Ag Day in Lafayette, IN, and more lately has been doing reporting work for Maryland Public Television, stopped by the office the other day. During our conversation, he mentioned that Ag Day has a search team looking for a replacement for Bruce Braun. Bruce took over anchoring the television program after Garth left. So, if you're interested in being considered for the position, contact Ag Day. The phone number is 317-497-9530. We also talked with Max Stewart (KXOK, St. Louis, MO) last week, mostly about the British Minister of Agriculture's visit to St. Louis and to see if Max would be covering the visit and could supply us with a feed for the USDA Radio New Service. In the course of that conversation, Max said he's getting a new intern student who will be working part time in April then full time from May on. She's Barb Brookens, and she'll be a senior at Southern Illinois Univ. next fall. We also talked with Hugh Whaley (American Soybean Assoc., St. Louis, MO). He was in D.C. for

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ASA's big board meeting. He called from his hotel on Sunday and we talked golf (what else) and we told him about the Minister of Ag's visit. So, he may be covering some of the visit to St. Louis as well. Still another phone conversation during the week, this time with Don Wick (Ag-Com Farm Net, Marshall, MN). He's coming to town to do some interviewing later this month and was looking for help in setting up times. We said we'd be happy to help out. Which provides an excellent opportunity to remind you we're always in the business to help you track down a spokesperson for a particular topic or issue. Just let us know. We've been getting letters and phone calls about our pending retirement, and we thank you. Our last day in the office will be April 1, which seems appropriate, somehow.


JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division